

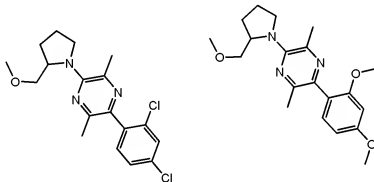
REMARKS

Claims 4, 6-13 and 17-21 were withdrawn, as requested by the Examiner. Applicants request that these claims be rejoined upon a determination of patentability of the remaining claims.

The Examiner requested clarification of the title of the instant application. The title of the instant application is "Pyrazine Compounds as CRF modulators." Applicants apologize for any confusion that may have arisen in referring to it differently.

35 USC § 103(a) Rejection of Claims 1-3, 5 and 14-16

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5 and 14-16 under 35 USC § 102(b) as unpatentable over the application of Yoon et al. (U.S. 2003/0018035). The Examiner contends that, in light of Yoon et al., at the time the invention was made Applicants' compounds would have been obvious to one skilled in the art. In particular, the Examiner notes that Yoon et al. discloses the compounds 2-(2,4-dichlorophenyl)-5-[2-(methoxymethyl)pyrrolidin-1-yl]-3,6-dimethylpyrazine and 2-(2,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-5-[2-(methoxymethyl)pyrrolidin-1-yl]-3,6-dimethylpyrazine:



The Examiner admits neither of the above compounds are embraced by the instant claims, because *both* R₁ and R₂ are not permitted to be methyl.

Applicants traverse the rejection of Claims 1-3, 5 and 14-16. In particular, The Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness. In an effort to expedite prosecution, however, Applicants amended Claim 5 to strike out the first and third compounds. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation directed to any subject matter cancelled herein.

In view of the amendments set forth herein and remarks above, applicants believe that the pending claims are fully allowable, and solicit the issuance of a notice to such effect. If a telephone interview is deemed to be helpful to expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

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